REMARKS

Claims 7-9 have been rejected. Claims 8 and 9 have been rejected under obviousness-type double patenting and claims 7-9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

I. Preliminary Matters

Applicant has amended the Abstract and the specification in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objections.

Also, the Examiner has objected claims 7 and 9 due to informalities. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claims 7 and 9 in the manner suggested by the Examiner, and respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objections.

II. Rejections under Obviousness-type Double Patenting

The Examiner has rejected claims 8 and 9 under the obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 2 of U.S. Patent No. 6,472,878 to Hara et al. ("Hara") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,050,680 to Moriyama ("Moriyama"). However, due to the amendments to claim 8, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the double patenting rejection. Since claim 9 is dependent upon claim 8, Applicant submits that the rejection of claim 9 is likewise overcome.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,193,364 to Iida ("Iida") in view of Moriyama.

Claims 7-9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iida in view of Moriyama.

A. Claim 7

Applicant submits that claim 7 is patentable over the cited references. For example, claim 7 recites a rigid member having a rigid wall. The rigid wall has a first through hole and a second through hole that both pass through the rigid wall.

The Examiner maintains that Iida discloses the features of claim 7. In particular, the Examiner maintains that elements 3, 9 and 11 disclose a wall and holes 6 and 12 disclose the claimed first and second through hole. However, elements 3, 9 and 11 of Iida do not disclose the claimed "rigid wall". Likewise, the holes 6 and 12 do not both pass through a "rigid" wall. Accordingly, Iida fails to teach or suggest all of the features recited in claim 7.

Since Moriyama fails to cure the deficient teachings of Iida set forth above, Applicant submits that claim 7 is patentable over the cited references and respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

B. Claim 8

Claim 8 recites a rigid member having a rigid wall, as well as first and second communication ports that both pass through the rigid wall.

The Examiner maintains that holes 6 and 12 disclose the claimed first and second communication ports, and elements 3, 9 and 11 disclose a wall. However, for analogous reasons as presented above for claim 7, Applicant submits that Iida fails to disclose the claimed rigid wall, and first and second communication ports passing through the rigid wall. Since Moriyama fails to cure the deficient teachings of Iida, Applicant submits that claim 8 is patentable over the cited reference, and respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

C. Claim 9

Since claim 9 is dependent upon claim 8, Applicant submits that such claim is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

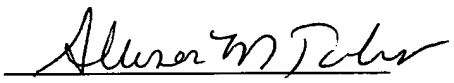
IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any

overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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